

MASCA Counselor's Notebook

MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL COUNSELORS ASSOCIATION

Vol. 53, No. 6

February 2017

ASCA School Counselor of the Year Event: Massachusetts School Counselor, Maureen Garrett, Honored

By DONNA M. BROWN, MASCA Executive Director

As I boarded the Acela in the very early morning hours of January 6th, I was excited to be traveling to Washington, D.C. to attend the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) gala honoring the School Counselor of the Year. It was important to show support for Massachusetts School Counselor of the Year, Maureen (Moe) Garrett of Whitman-Hanson Regional High School.

During the trip, it was possible to stream the welcome the school counselors received at The White House and hear First Lady, Michelle Obama's wonderful and emotional farewell speech to them — and us. Her support of the school counseling profession is solid; she understands what our profession does and how we make a difference in kids' lives.

As Moe told me later, there was an advantage to being short, as she was front and just to Mrs. Obama's left during the presentation and got a hug from the First Lady at the end.

If you haven't seen the YouTube video of the White House visit, please view it at <https://www.c-span.org/video/?421056-1/michelle-obama-delivers-final-speech-first-lady>. You will come away feeling proud to be a school



Donna Brown, MASCA Executive Director, and Moe Garrett, MA School Counselor of the Year, at the ASCA SCOY gala



Moe Garrett, pictured to the right of Michelle Obama



Moe Garrett and her husband at The White House in front of a portrait of Dolly Madison

counselor.

The ASCA gala at Union Station was elegant. Held in the East Hall, the gala was hosted by local D.C. television personality, Sam Sweeney. Welcomed by ASCA Executive Director, Richard Wong, we then heard greetings from Eric Waldo, executive director of Michelle Obama's Reach Higher initiative. He assured everyone that Reach Higher was going to continue after Mrs. Obama left The White House.

Another special guest was Martin Dahinden, the Swiss ambassador to the United States. Ambassador Dahinden hosted the counselors the evening before at an information session about Switzerland's approach to vocational education, followed by a lovely reception.

A sumptuous meal preceded the presentations to each state School Counselor of the Year winner, the Finalists Awards, and the School Counselor of the Year, Terri Tchorzynski of Battle Creek, Michigan. Mrs. Tchorzynski, a school counselor at the Calhoun Area Career Center, shared her thoughts on helping students find their passion.

The evening concluded with pictures and hugs and feeling very proud to be a school counselor.



The 2017 MASCA Conference is gaining great momentum! The **30 program sessions** are especially structured to equip, encourage, and strengthen your efforts on the front lines with your students. Please spread the word to your colleagues and others who you know would benefit from high quality professional development.

Dr. Carolyn Stone, nationally-known speaker and school counselor advocate, will be presenting the Pre-Conference (included in registration fee) and the Keynote Address.



- ***Pre-Conference Workshop:*** Legal Muscle to Support LGBTQ Students - Practical guidance and resources to support your students!
- ***Keynote Address:*** Let Your Advocacy Actions Define Your Role! - This is a remarkable Keynote!

You do not want to miss this conference! If you have not already made plans to attend this exciting event on **Monday, April 3 and Tuesday, April 4**, please go to MASCA.wildapricot.org for more details. ***Early Registration rates are available until February 3, 2017.***

While you are registering, please reserve your room at the Boxboro Regency Hotel & Conference Center to take advantage of the **\$99 early bird special!** Staying at the hotel Monday evening provides a great opportunity to network with other counselors from across the state at the **President's Reception** in the relaxing Courtyard. We look forward to seeing you at this exciting conference in April!

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DONNA M. BROWN
Adjunct Professor, UMass Boston
P.O. Box 366, 779 Center Street
Bryantville, MA 02327
Tel. 781-293-2835
E-mail: executivedirector@masca.org

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Mattacheese Middle School
West Yarmouth, MA
E-mail: drkatesalas@gmail.com

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Tel. 781-618-7434 • Fax 781-618-7098
Email: ruth.carrigan@whrsd.org

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Wellesley High School
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Tel. 781-446-6290 x4637
E-mail: steerej@wellesleyps.org

IRIS GODES

Dean College
99 Main Street, Franklin, MA 02038
Tel. 508-541-1547 • Fax 508-541-8726
E-mail: igodes@dean.edu

AMY L. COOK, Ph.D.

E-mail: amy.cook@umb.edu

HELEN O'DONNELL, Ed.D.

Adjunct Graduate Faculty, Fitchburg State University
MA Model Institute Trainer
10 Maplewood Terr., Hadley, MA 01035
Tel. 413-549-1914
E-mail: helenod@att.net

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E-mail: cn@masca.org

President's Message: Winter Self-Care

By KATE SALAS, Ed.D., MASCA President

Warm winter greetings, school counselors! The winter can be challenging for New Englanders. Counselors are caretakers and we are not able to help others if we are not taking care of ourselves. I have created a list of things that help me and perhaps one or two may help you too!



1. Get enough sleep - I am an enthusiastic sleeper!

2. Eat healthy - while eating a whole pizza is tempting during your Netflix binge fest, your body would appreciate some nice fruits and vegetables every once and a while.

3. Get outside - even if it is for a few minutes, the fresh air that accom-

panies a healthy dose of nature will help. Have you read Richard Louv's book, *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature-Deficit Disorder*?

4. Make time to play - schedule in some playtime (whatever that is for you!). I enjoy taking my dog to the Marie Kondo's *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up: The Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organizing*.

6. Do you have a calm-down kit in your office for your students? You could easily make one

of these for yourself. Some things to include: your favorite coffee, a gift card from Christmas that still can be used, a new color nail polish, fuzzy socks, etc. You can add anything that might offer you a

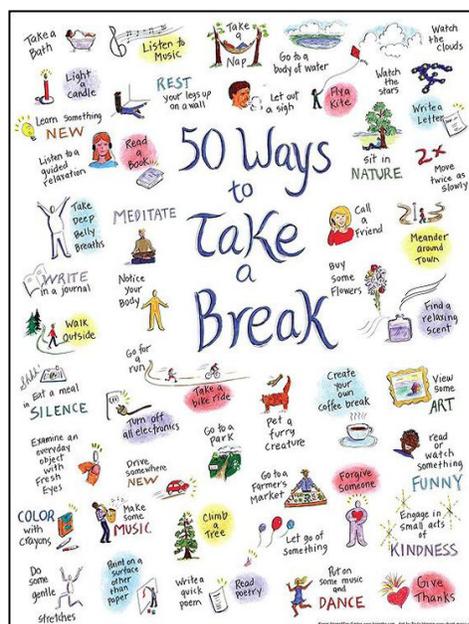
few minutes of calm. However, if your calm-down kit contains your favorite alcoholic beverage then you might want to leave it at

home!

Recurring emotional stress can happen to anyone in our position but I feel like we are particularly vulnerable this time of year. Please take care of yourselves. Try the few things listed above if you think they would help.

Also, stay connected with your fellow school counselors. Having a supportive network is essential. I still talk to colleagues in previous schools where I have worked. As a matter of fact, I received a call last week to join a knitting club. I am also connected to other professionals online and, of course, look forward to those face-to-face meetings at conferences.

If you have some tried and true things to get you through the winter, I would love to hear about them!



An Imminent Challenge

By WILL ENGLISH, School Counselor at Peabody Veterans Memorial High School

Increasingly, schools are taking on more of a lead role in our mental health system. Last month, the Boston Globe highlighted the long wait times at emergency rooms for people suffering from a behavioral health crisis versus a physical illness or injury. As school counselors, we are called upon to help our students find care in a world with increasingly limited options. Insurance — be it private health care coverage or MassHealth — often determines whether we can help a student find a placement and what services they can receive.

The outlook for helping our students get the care they need is about to get worse. In July, a certificate program that allows those of

us with a 48-credit Masters degree the chance of fulfilling our requirements for mental health licensure will be discontinued. After the July deadline, if you would like certification, you will need to complete a 60-credit master's program in addition to your current training.

Why this new obstacle is being foisted on the profession at a time of national mental health crisis is truly baffling. The number of opiate-related overdoses alone has now surpassed gun-related homicides in this country. With such significant mental health challenges, it makes sense that state licensure boards would make it easier, not harder, for professionals to receive training and certification. I

have written to my elected officials about this issue, and I am still waiting for a satisfactory answer.

I encourage my fellow MEd graduates to consider enrolling in these programs before they are grandfathered out in July. We need more professionals with greater clinical skills in the schools as we are faced with an increase of hospitalizations around suicidal ideation and addiction. I would also encourage you all to reach out to your state elected officials to question why it is becoming harder to get certification. As we continue to be called upon to be mental health professionals, we deserve to have access to proper training at an affordable cost.

Massachusetts Awarded \$2 Million to Improve Career Education

The Baker-Polito Administration recently announced that the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and JPMorgan Chase & Co. have selected Massachusetts as one of 10 states to receive a \$1.95 million grant to strengthen and expand high-quality career education pathways for students.

The grant, which will be distributed over the next three years, is part of the \$75 million, five-year New Skills for Youth initiative developed by JPMorgan Chase in collaboration with CCSSO and Advance CTE. It aims to strengthen career-focused education starting in high school and ending with postsecondary degrees and/or industry-recognized credentials aligned with high-



skill jobs.

Massachusetts has received the grant from CCSSO for the New Skills for Youth initiative after a rigorous review process, which included examination of the state's plan to transform the process of designing and developing career preparedness education programs This includes:

- Launching a major competitive grant program to fund the creation of high-quality career pathways

that fully prepare students for high-skill, high-wage careers;

- Developing a comprehensive career advisement system in partnership with the Massachusetts School Counselors Association so that all students can make more informed college and career choices;

- Creating clear guidelines to help high schools develop and implement high-quality career pathways that will better prepare students for success after graduation.

MASCA leadership will keep you informed as more information becomes available. We look forward to being part of this exciting work to increase college and career readiness for all students in the Commonwealth.

New MASCA Affiliate: South Coast School Counselors Association

MASCA is excited to welcome our newest affiliate: the South Coast School Counselors Association. Located in the Greater New Bedford-Fall River area, the affiliate will offer opportunities for professional

development and networking to school counselors in the area.

Congratulations and best wishes to the newly-elected slate of officers:

President: Dr. Heather Larkin, LMHC;

Vice President: Linda Donahue;
Co-Secretaries: Kate Correia/
Michelle Morris;
Treasurer: Glenn Fogue;
Web-Master: Chris Fernandes,
LMHC/CSAC.

Visit the Counselor's Corner section of the MASCA website to learn more about events, resources, and information not officially sponsored by MASCA, but which may be of general interest to the counseling community.
<https://masca.wildapricot.org/Counselors-Corner>

February Awareness Dates

African American History Month
Career & Tech Education Month
Teen Dating Violence Awareness & Prevention Month

2 National Groundhog Job Shadow Day
6-10 Nat'l School Counseling Week
13-17 Random Acts of Kindness Week
21-27 National Eating Disorders Awareness Week

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Using Books to Build Social-Emotional Learning and Literacy Skills for Elementary School Children

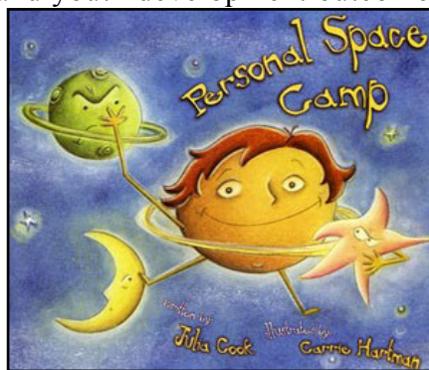
By AMY L. COOK, PhD, VP of Counselor Educators

Almost two thirds of this nation's fourth graders are reading below grade level. According to the 2013 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading test, 32% of students scored at the below basic level and 65% scored below proficient. Students, especially those from low-income households, face a myriad of barriers concerning literacy achievement. Issues regarding resource availability, emotional resilience, and school adjustment and readiness all contribute to the literacy achievement gap. Consequences of delays can negatively impact long-term academic performance. Children from low socioeconomic backgrounds are particularly at risk due to limited access to literacy-rich environments and regular reading opportunities.

The increasing accountability demands to meet assessment standards leave little room for educators to focus on supporting children's social-emotional development. According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation, social-emo-



tional skills are essential to navigating not only peer relationships and youth development outcomes,



Personal Space Camp, written by Julia Cook, is often used by elementary school counselors to help students understand the concept of personal space

but have been linked to improving literacy and academic outcomes. School counselors recognize the importance of social-emotional

learning (SEL) as a foundation for supporting healthy interactions between children and their environments. They provide regular support to promote SEL, working individually with students and in the classroom. However, school counselors may also be interested in delivering a curriculum that simultaneously focuses on honing children's literacy skills and SEL.

Engaging children in shared book reading can build social-emotional skills, while reinforcing literacy instruction. Through specific book selections containing content focused on social-emotional skills, school counselors can guide children in becoming active storytellers during shared reading sessions. Books can be selected based on the specific social-emotional skills children may benefit from learning. The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has identified core competencies central to SEL: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible de-

(continued on pg. 7)

Statewide Call for Candidates

If you have a desire to be more involved in MASCA, we definitely have a place for you to serve. Our MASCA volunteers are crucial to our organization and are the driving forces behind many of our important initiatives. We can use your help on a variety of committees or in a more formal leadership role. Several Governing Board member positions will be

open for the 2017/2018 year and will be filled through an election in April.

Information about MASCA positions can be found in the MASCA Bylaws which are located on MASCA's website (masca.wildapricot.org). Choose tabs "About," "Governance," and then "Bylaws." Candidates for the position of MASCA Governing Board

Member need to collect a minimum of 10 signatures from MASCA members and submit nomination forms and a resume to Ruth Carrigan (Ruth.Carrigan@whrsd.org) before **March 1, 2017**.

If you are interested in taking on a formal leadership role or in helping serve at the committee level, or if you have any questions, please reach out to any MASCA leader.

BOOKS (cont'd from page 6)

cision making. Julia Cook, Trudy Ludwig, Maria Dismody, Cheri Meiners, and a variety of other authors have written culturally relevant children's books that focus on SEL. Various options for books are also available at www.goodreads.com and Scholastic.

To develop SEL and reinforce literacy skills, school counselors could employ specific reading and discussion strategies. First, before beginning to read the selected book, children can be asked to predict what the story is about based on the title and illustrations. During the shared reading, specific prompts can be asked.

There are five types of prompts represented by the acronym **CROWD**. The **C** represents a word or sentence completion prompt, which provides children the opportunity to practice target vocabulary as well as assess the understanding of key SEL skills. The **R** is a recall prompt that asks children to recall what happened previously in the story. An **O** prompt is an open-ended question to elicit what is happening in the story. A **W** prompt uses "Wh" questions (what, when, where, and why) to ascertain students' understanding and skills focused on in the story. The **D** is a distancing prompt that is used to guide children to relate the story to personal experiences in their lives.

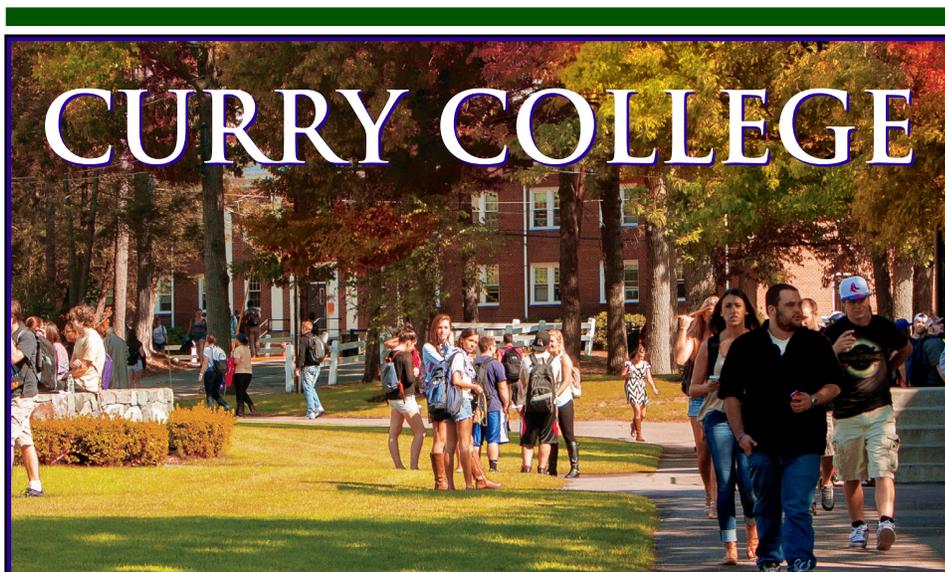
The **CROWD** prompts are used in conjunction with the **PEER** sequencing technique to guide readers in elaborating and expanding learning of targeted vocabulary, concepts, or skills. The **PEER** sequencing techniques include the following four steps: **P** provide a **CROWD** prompt, **E** evaluate chil-

dren's response, **E** expand on the response, and provide opportunities to **R** repeat target vocabulary or concepts. ReadingRockets.org and [What Works Clearinghouse](http://WhatWorksClearinghouse) provide additional information about the above-shared reading sequencing, including resources and strategies.

Once the shared reading and discussion is completed, the school counselor can engage children in a follow-up structured activity to practice the social-emotional skills targeted in the book. During the activity, children can be encouraged to translate skills learned from the shared reading into the game or activity to reinforce generalization of the focused SEL skills. Follow-up activities could include playing a game where turn taking,

trust, or sharing is involved; creating a drawing of the situations or characters in the story; and acting out storylines.

Implementation of shared reading sessions is flexible. Sessions can be conducted with children one-to-one, in small groups, or classrooms. The shared reading and discussion portion typically requires 15-20 minutes, and the follow-up activity can be tailored based on available time. Book selection should be developmentally and culturally relevant. It is recommended that at least two sessions are conducted per identified SEL skill to ensure generalizability of the skill from one session to the next. For more information, please email Amy Cook at amy.cook@umb.edu.



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Labor Market Information – Resource Request

By BETH HENNESSEY and HELEN C. O'DONNELL, Co-Chairs, Work Group #1

Massachusetts Reach Higher Work Group #1, Preparing ALL students for Viable Careers and Citizenship, is striving to develop quality professional development training (and resources) on labor market information for school counselors so they will be

more equipped to contribute to the college and career readiness of their students.

Please assist us in generating a resource library of training materials for both counselors and students, including webinars, websites, and other educational

materials, by filling in this short survey: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeOYgH2A-jNjdnLNSu5exIaXS6Mj2gJIQft-9TVAizUBjAnDv2w/viewform>.

Thank you so much for your assistance.

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MASCA Conference Update

The bookstore is back! The National Center for Youth Issues will bring a bookstore offering school counseling resources to support you with your students. Flip through the pages and use your school Purchase Order, credit card, check, or cash to purchase best selling social/emotional, mental health, college/career, and other general counseling material for use in K-12 schools.

2015-2016 Graduation and Dropout Rates Coming Soon

The 2015-2016 graduation and dropout rates will be made public in early February 2017. Over the past decade, Massachusetts has done an impressive job of improving both rates. Chart A demonstrates that improvement since the 2009-2010 school year. While the public focus remains heavily centered on the 4-year graduation rate, the Department considers the 5-year rate equally important and has made improving the 5-year graduation rate one of the Department's goals. The 5-year graduation rate tells a story of persistence, resilience, and determination among the hundreds of students who do not give up and stay in school an extra year to earn their high school diploma.

Even more noteworthy is the fact that the highest percentage point increases in the 5-year rate happen among the ELL, Students with disabilities, low income, and high needs populations as seen in Chart B (data is for the 2014 cohort). The dropout rates have also improved over the past decade to a record statewide low of 1.9% (see Chart C).

The Office of College, Career, and Technical Education will be presenting a webinar on **Tuesday March 14, 2017** focused on what will be the newly released 2016 Graduation and Dropout Rates. We will be highlighting a district who has improved both rates. The district will share successful strategies, policies, and programs that contributed to their improved rates. Please use the following link to register for this webinar: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/conference/?ConferenceID=9424>.

Chart A

	2010 Cohort	2011 Cohort	2012 Cohort	2013 Cohort	2014 Cohort	2015 Cohort
4 year Graduation Rate	82.1%	83.4%	84.7%	85.0%	86.1%	87.3%
5 year Graduation Rate	84.7%	86.3%	87.5%	87.7%	88.5%	N/A

Chart B

	# in 2014 Cohort	4 year rate	5 year rate	% Increase Year 5
All Students	73,168	86.1%	88.5%	+2.4%
ELL	5,134	63.9%	69.8%	+5.9%
Students w/disabilities	14,195	69.1%	73.5%	+4.4%
Low Income	31,156	75.5%	79.6%	+4.1%
High Needs	38,171	76.5%	80.3%	+3.8%

Chart C

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Total HS Enrollment	290,502	289,161	287,055	287,506	287,478	288,934
Dropout Rate	2.9%	2.7%	2.5%	2.2%	2.0%	1.9%

MARCH 1:

Deadline for UMass Boston's Regular Admissions Application and Financial Aid Priority Consideration

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undergrad.admissions@umb.edu
 617.287.6100



PBIS and School Counselors, Part 2

By AMY WHEELER-SUTTON, *Counselor's Notebook* Editor

As I wrote about last month, I have recently transitioned from being a practicing school counselor to working as the Training and Development Coordinator for Vermont Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). I help schools in Vermont to begin and sustain implementation of PBIS in their schools.

School counselors often play an important role on a school's PBIS team. They have behavioral expertise, which is necessary for a successful PBIS team. School counselors are usually able to take a birds-eye view of the school and have a pulse on what is happening with students, staff, administration, families, and community members. Having this broad lens is helpful for a team that is making school-wide decisions that impact school climate.

Like I mentioned last month, PBIS can strengthen the school counseling program and vice versa. At my previous school in Vermont, we had both a strong, comprehensive school counseling program and were implementing PBIS with a high level of fidelity. As school counselors, we were able to connect our lessons to the school-wide expectations of caring, safe, and responsible. For instance, when teaching self-regulation skills, we would teach safe ways to calm down. Students were then acknowledged throughout the school for being able to use safe calm-down strategies. When students are reinforced for positive behavior, that behavior is likely to increase.

The school counselors also helped to facilitate the implementation of the *Second Step* curriculum school-

wide, as a Universal PBIS intervention. At 8:15am every Tuesday, everyone in the building participated in teaching *Second Step*. Non-classroom teachers were paired up with classroom teachers to co-teach the curriculum. The benefit of this was

that all adults in the building had the same common language to use with students.

See upcoming *Counselor's Notebook* issues for more information about PBIS and how school counselors can be involved.

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Career Activities Corner: K-12 College and Career Readiness Activities

Colleagues are welcome to submit brief lessons with identified standards alignments, measurable student learning outcomes, and interdisciplinary curriculum links. Submit to Helen O'Donnell at helenod@att.net.

Wear your Gear and Alumni Day

Submitted by: Dawn Estes-Daub, MA; Kimberly Conant, MA; Mt. Everett Reg MS-HS, Sheffield, MA

Unit: Career and Workforce Awareness

Grade Level: Middle and High School

Delivery: Tier 1, Whole School

Description: To assist fluid movement into the workforce and viable careers, DESE suggests that all students develop and maintain personal Individual Learning Plans (ILP) through authentic learning experiences. Our Wear Your Gear and Alumni Day activities allows students to actively participate in their college and career readiness exploration and post HS planning. During “Alumni Week” at school, students participate in a variety of CCR activities:

- Students generate a list of questions to ask alumni on Alumni Day and completed a personal college and career questionnaire.
- All district employees are asked to participate in a Wear Your Gear career awareness day for students. Faculty are asked to wear or display information pertaining to a college or trade school. Other district employees and staff are asked to provide information regarding certificate or training programs in which they participated to prepare them for the workforce and current jobs. Throughout the day, adults share their post-secondary experiences, career pathways, and how high school academics are used in their current employment.
- On Alumni Day, students are divided by advisory groups into learning sessions during which a panel of alumni provide insights and information about their respective post high school and career paths. The alumni-student discussions are guided by grade-appropriate topics and student-generated questions.
- In addition to these activities, students utilize MASS CIS and Naviance to complete personal learning inventories, research career clusters, and incorporate this information into their ILP.

Student Performance Objectives: By the end of the CCR unit:

- **Cognitive:** Students will be able to identify their personal learning styles, list interesting career clusters to research, and complete a CCR questionnaire focusing on their post-secondary plans.
- **Affective:** Students will realize there are a myriad of options available to them after high school and the importance of setting college and career goals by developing and maintaining their ILP's and actively participating in career activities.
- **Behavioral:** Students will be able to write and ask open-ended inquiry questions, maintain their ILP's, and independently access/use MASS CIS and Naviance.

Student Learning Standards Links:

MA Career Development Benchmarks (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/connect/cde/guideglossary.pdf>): Academic/Technical Development: A2-4, A4-1, A4-2; Workplace Readiness: W1-1; Personal Social: PS2-3

ASCA Mindsets and Behaviors for Student Success (www.schoolcounselor.org): Mindset #3, #4, #6: Behaviors (Learning Strategies) #7, #9: Behaviors (Social Skills) #1, #3

ASCA National Student Standards (www.schoolcounselor.org): A:A1.2, A:B1.4, A:B2.7, C:A1.6, C:A1.7, PS:A1.3, PS:B1.12

Common Core State Standards (CCSS) (www.corestandards.com): Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas: ELA:23.14 Organize ideas for emphasis in a way that suits the purpose of the write

Interdisciplinary Links: ELA: Speaking, Listening and Writing

Massachusetts School Counselors Association, Inc.
COUNSELOR'S NOTEBOOK
Amy Wheeler-Sutton, Editor

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The mission of MASCA is to advocate for school counselors in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts by providing leadership, collaboration, and professional development.

Stay informed by visiting MASCA's website regularly.

You can share your views with fellow MASCA members by joining in the Forum.

<https://masca.wildapricot.org/>

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